DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 339 482 PS 020 084

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TITLE Development and Implementation of Activities Designed To Target Uninvolved Parents and Increase Home and School Interaction of Disadvantaged Families.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 66p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Computer Assisted Instruction; *Economically Disadvantaged; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Students; High Risk Students; Home Instruction; Intervention; Low Income; *Parent Attitudes; *Parent Participation; *Parent School Relationship; Parent Teacher Cooperation; *Parent Workshops; Questionnaires; Student Behavior
IDENTIFIERS Education Consolidation Improvement Act Chapter 1

ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to use training to increase economically disadvantaged parents' participation in their children's academic learning. Objectives were that targeted, uninvolved parents would: (1) increase communication with their children's school; (2) increase their attendance at school functions involving parents; (3) increase their involvement in their child's education; (4) identify family support services they needed to become more involved; (5) demonstrate initiative in educating their child at home; and (6) check out a computer and software, which would be used to provide educational materials to their children at home. A preassessment questionnaire was used to determine family needs and interests. Several workshops were developed. During the 12-week practicum, the take-home computer program was used to bridge classroom instruction with parent involvement at home. A post-assessment questionnaire was used to determine the extent to which participants felt the program was successful. All six objectives were met. Results indicate a high degree of correlation between practicum results and results described in related literature. Appended are related materials and 29 references. (GLR)

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DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO TARGET UNINVOLVED PARENTS AND INCREASE HOME AND SCHOOL INTERACTION OF DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES

BY

HENRY ROBERT LEIDNER

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A Practicum I Report presented to the Ed.D Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1991

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Henry R. Leidner under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in the Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

10-16-91
Date of Final Approval Report

Georgianna Lowen, Ed.D.
Adviser

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer would like to thank the Chapter I Computer Assisted Instructional Lab teacher, administrators, parents, and students that participated in this project, for without their assistance this project would not have evolved. A very special thank you to my wife and daughter without whose help, support, love and understanding this practicum would never have become reality.

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ABSTRACT

Development and Implementation of Activities Designed to Target Uninvolved Parents and Increase Home / School Interaction of Disadvantaged Families. Leidner, Henry Robert, 1991: Practicum I Report, Nova University, Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Parent Involvement/Parent Participation/Parent Role/Parent Cooperation/Parent Teacher Partnership/Parent-School Relationship/Parent Training/Workshops/Home Instruction for Parents/Observation/Children's Behavior

This practicum was aimed at increasing parent's participation in their children's academic learning through training. Two corollary aims were to increase demonstration of community/school interaction and to encourage attendance of the parents in the workshops or home instruction.

A pre-assessment questionnaire was used to determine family needs and interests. Several workshops were developed. A take-home computer program was used during the twelve week period to bridge the classroom instruction with the parent involvement at home. Software was directly correlated with the individual child's learning level. Reporting of time spent by parents working with their children on school-related activities was done by the lead teacher and home/school liaisons through various forms of communication. Attendance of the parents in the training sessions and at school related programs and functions was recorded using sign-in sheets specifically for the targeted group. A post-assessment questionnaire was done to determine to what extent the participants felt the program was successful.

All six objectives of this practicum project were met or exceeded due to the design of the project itself. Careful attention to the target population and their prior pattern of uninvolvement were analyzed and strategies were developed to insure participation of even the most reluctant parent. The overwhelming parental support for this project and the success of every objective indicates a high degree of correlation between the results of this practicum and the results described in related literature.

Permission Statement

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many parent involvement programs are based on the parent volunteering services to the school or helping their child at home. As a result, a certain segment of the population are uninvolved due to their inability to participate in traditional ways and their belief that they can't make a significant difference in their child's education. Effective parent involvement programs for low income parents must consider differing levels of parent development and existing needs for support prior to asking parents to provide services to the school and / or child.

The Work Setting

The work setting is a school targeted for a Chapter I School Wide Project. The school is located in a once thriving agricultural community whose land now lies dormant and unproductive due to several freezes that have occurred over the past few years. There are 435 students in attendance of which 92 percent are Black, one percent Hispanic and the remaining seven percent consisting of White students. The school is located in the highest crime and drug infested areas in the district.

The People Involved

Of the 435 students in attendance, seventy - eight

percent of the student population were identified as " at risk " as defined by the county. The students are identified as economically deprived according to the free and reduced lunch forms. The school is ranked last with regards to student academic performance, and less than half of the students who enter the middle school and go on to the receiving high school complete their education.

The Writer's Role, Training and Background

The writer is a coordinator for a compensatory program serving 1300 students in reading and math remediation in grade levels two through five. Instruction takes place at seven public schools and one private institution. Parent training and parent involvement is an integral part of the program. It is the coordinator's responsibility to provide the optimum education for the children which includes providing the best parent training possible and encouraging maximum involvement.

The author, married and father of one teenage daughter, has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education and a Masters of Education with a specialization in Guidance and Counseling. He has taught elementary school children for eight years and has held an administrative position for the past five years two of which were spent as the coordinator of the district's first Head Start Program.

The writer has been given the responsibility of

restructuring the educational program, parental involvement, and community outreach program for the county's first Chapter I School Wide Program. The role demands constant contact with faculty, students, administration, parents and community representatives. In addition, the development of inservice modules for teachers and parents is an essential part of the School Wide Program component. Lastly, the writer is also responsible for the coordination of classes with the local community college and the neighborhood in which the school is located.

CHAPTER II

THE STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The site that was chosen for this practicum was a Chapter I elementary school in southeast Seminole county located in a once thriving agricultural community. Due to several severe winters which have had direct effect upon the once abundant harvest, local farm owners have begun, over the last several years to sell their farm land to make way for industrial and residential communities; thereby, leaving this community without the economic revenue source that it once relied upon to support its family. The community found itself in the middle of one of the county's highest crime and drug-use areas according to local law enforcement officials. Due to this vast change in the economic and social factors of the community, the interior and exterior elements that make up the very being of the school have deteriorated along with the community and its family structure. There was an evident lack of involvement in any school activity on the part of parents of disadvantaged Chapter I students. Numerous attempts were made by the district school board to develop and implement various programs to supplement and extend academic and parental

programs with little success.

The problem was that current efforts had been unsuccessful at obtaining a satisfactory level of observable parental participation on the part of parents of disadvantaged Chapter I students at a specific school site.

Problem Documentation

A comprehensive study was done of past and present C.T.B.S. and S.S.A.T. scores. Evidence to support the existence of the local problem was gathered from the district school level which includes test data, contact with the Florida State Association of Parents and Teachers, records from on site and district level workshops presented by curriculum personnel and classes sponsored by the local community college (see table #1). Interviews with the principal and assistant principal, staff personnel and non-instructional personnel indicated a low level of communication as evidenced by school records which indicated failure to acknowledge conferences and failure to attend scheduled parent conferences. After discussions with the district level volunteer coordinator and on site guidance counselor, it was determined that volunteer positions were filled by individuals from outside the school community (see table #2). The school maintained the highest level of economic deprivation the county records, presently at 75.39%. Thirty-six percent of the students attending

Table 1

Analysis of Data Indicating Lack of Parental Involuement

Indicators	Number of Parents	Student Count	Percentage
Average P.T.A. members in attendance	23	435	5%
Average attendance at school and community sponsored classes and workshops	16	435	3%
Parent attendance at scheduled conferences	43	435	10%
Volunteer positions from community	06	38	16%

Table 2

An Analysis of Data of Possible Student Behaviors Reflecting Lack of Parental Involvement

Indicators	Number of Students	Student Count	Percentage
Student referral for disciplinary action	213	435	49%
Level of economic deprivation	328	435	75%
Students retained once	157	435	36%
Students retained twice	57	435	13%
Migrant population	117	435	27%

have been retained once, and thirteen percent have been retained twice. Since the opening of the school year two hundred and thirteen students had been referred for disciplinary action. The school also was represented by a twenty-seven percent migrant population which resulted in late arrivals and early dismissals. The student population was comprised of seventy-eight percent Black with the remaining population composed of White, Hispanic and Asian.

Causative Analysis

The lack of involvement was a result of many factors. Night-time employment was a large contributing factor for the lack of involvement in conference attendance. Another major identified contributing factor was the trust level by parents towards the administrative and teaching staff of the school. Poor attendance at night meetings could be attributed to the lack of transportation and inadequate babysitting services. Several families did not attend due to a language barrier and the lack of an interpreter. In addition parents were aware of the high incidence of crime, drug and alcohol abuse in the surrounding area which increases the chance of violence occurring. Teachers and the school guidance counselor have reported that many families do not have access to a phone. And finally, of the parents whose children attend the school many were unemployed or hold more than one job, which

left little time for involvement in school activities.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

When educators traditionally think of parental involvement we think of it in relationship to the school setting and many times fail to realize that it is a combination of several factors working in conjunction with one another (Williams & Chavkin, 1986). In analyzing parental involvement, one must look at the total interaction time between the parent and child and the parent and the school. The parent's own personal abilities and development as well as his / her attitude towards the school must be considered (Rick, 1985)

A child needs parents who care and also are competent in their caring methods if they are to provide a supportive educational environment. Parents need the know-how and information necessary if they are to provide that environment (Henderson, 1986). Also many school districts have targeted the area of parent involvement as a area of critical investment during the next decade (Florida Department of Education, 1989). Outreach efforts and opportunities for families to have their needs met have escalated.

A review confirms that currently, early childhood and elementary education programs still tend to approach the parent participation or involvement component only in relation to its effect on the child outcome, and to ignore

the impact of the developmental level of the parent as a significant factor in child outcome as well as amount of involvement (Landerholm, 1988).

Furthermore, the extent to which parents are receptive to parent involvement activities depends largely on the staff's sensitivity to the parent's primary needs and priorities. Parents have different levels of understanding, acceptance, knowledge, skills, strengths, limitations, needs, and wants. For some parents, existing activities are what meet their needs; for others the activities are above and beyond their immediate needs and they cannot take advantage of the services (Landerholm, 1988).

According to Cicheti (1987), multi-risk families often have high levels of stress. They usually have environmental problems, a lack of basic nutritional and medical services and pressure from social and financial imbalances. These families also have a low support level and suffer from isolation due to the lack of a telephone and transportation. The inability to find and hold a good job adds to their stress.

Four types of parents who consistently do not attend school meetings or communicate with teachers are the apathetic, burned-out, intimidated and the resigned (Rutherford, 1979). Parents with more education are more involved in the activities of the school such as attending

P.T.A. meetings and parent conferences (Stevenson, 1987).

Frequently, the disadvantaged child lives in a home where he develops negative attitudes towards education and experiences failure and frustration at school (Kackley, 1984).

Research has found the most commonly requested parent involvement activities were educational type activities (Cone, 1985). Typically, strategies aimed at promoting parent / school partnerships are based on school or child needs and don't consider existing parental skills or needs (Clark, 1983).

For many minority parents, the goal of being actively involved in their child's school is unattainable due to existing negative attitudes held by teachers and administrators unwilling to have flexible programs which allow for cultural differences (Becker & Epstein, 1982). Mandates alone cannot bring about changes that are necessary to involve low income parents in the schools; teachers and administrators must try new practices and strategies (Mc Laughlin & Shields,1987).

In surveying the literature , it seems that most early intervention programs offer some type of parent educational activity (Walberg, 1984). The need in this area seems to be more evaluation of the needs of parents specifically if help is to reach the child, and to offer a wide range of parent involvement activities on a

developmental continuum, especially with the addition of support type activities (Mc Laughlin, 1987).

School-based strategies tend not to engage the participation of low income parents since many of the activities designed for parent involvement are written on school terms for advantaged parents during their time frame, using traditional areas of involvement, and assuming easy and comfortable communication with teachers and administrators (Mc Lauglin, 1987).

Many minority parents lack the necessary skills of communication and feel inadequate and uninformed about school issues (Cavazos, 1989). The literature suggests that the school provide printed activities for parents to do with their children, hands-on supplies such as make-and-takes, and other hardware and software that is not available to underprivileged families (Wherry, 1989).

Conclusions can be drawn from this recent research that although the purpose of parent involvement originally was to help the parent teach the child at home or be involved at school, recent findings indicate that the parent's developmental needs must be considered first to obtain desired student outcomes (Fine, 1989). In designing program offerings for parent involvement, it is important to consider the parent's development level, range and type of programs that would meet their specific needs, and to be as

flexible as possible in presenting these services to parents (Lyons, 1983).. In this way, those same uninvolved parents would become active participants in their child's education and meet family needs at the same time.

CHAPTER III

Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

The general goal of this practicum was for the parent participation of targeted disadvantaged families to be increased. Expectations included increased parental involvement.

Behavioral Objectives

The following goals and objectives were projected for this project:

Behavioral Objectives	Standard of Achievement	Evaluation Tool
1. Parents will demonstrate increased home / school communication.	1. 20 out of 20 Chapter 1. I targeted uninvolved parents will have teacher / parent contact during this practicum project.	1. Parents will display increased dialogue as evidenced by phone calls, home visits and daily logs recorded on forms in Appendices A and E.
2. Targeted uninvolved parents will display increased attendance at parent / school functions.	2. An increase of 18 out of 20 targeted uninvolved parents will attend Chapter I events, P.T.A. meetings, conferences and other school-related activities.	2. Attendance records of Chapter I, P.T.A. and other activities will be recorded on form in Appendix F.

3. Targeted uninvolved parents will demonstrate increased participation and /or involvement in their child's education.	3. 20 out of 20 targeted uninvolved parents will have one of the designated methods of parent / teacher conferences.	3. Records of documented parent / teacher contacts will be recorded on forms in Appendices A, D, E, F.
4. Uninvolved parents will identify family support services needed to become more involved.	4. 16 out of 20 targeted uninvolved parents will rate post practicum experiences favorably and will identify in writing social services that would be provided to assure more active parental involvement.	4. A majority of favorable responses and an analysis of written responses from the exit interview form in Appendix C.
5. Targeted uninvolved parents will demonstrate initiative in educating their child at home.	5. 20 out of 20 targeted uninvolved parents will attend orientation and training sessions for the Chapter I take-home computers which are available to this target group.	5. Records of the take-home computer sessions will be recorded on form located in Appendix F.
6. Targeted uninvolved parents will provide educational materials for their children by checking a computer and related software for home use.	6. 20 out of 20 targeted uninvolved parents will check out a computer and related software for home use.	6. Records of computer / software checkout will be documented on a form in Appendix G.

Measurement of Objectives

During implementation of this program, daily instruction of all children was to take place at the selected school. Additionally, weekly monitoring of those children involved in the program was to take place utilizing Chapter I teachers, Chapter I Resource Teachers and Chapter I Home / School Liaisons. Weekly communication with targeted families was to be recorded on a specified form (see Appendix A). Criteria for positive documentation of increased parent involvement included initial interview contacts, weekly communication reports, attendance at school functions, and documented activities using the take-home computer.

Objectives one, two and three were to be measured by specific forms used to collect this data. Parent / Teacher Conference Forms were to record home / school contact of any type. Other forms were to be used to document home visits and phone calls by family because the personnel contacting each family was varied. Attendance at any school related event was to be documented on a generic Parent Involvement Documentation Form which was available at all functions such as programs, P.T.A. meetings, workshops and Chapter I Take-Home Computer sessions.

To measure objective four, pre and post project

interview questionnaires on parental involvement were to be completed by all the families within the Chapter I Take-Home Computer Program (see Appendices B and C) and the computer lab teacher, to document the specific needs, problems areas, and changes.

Documentation of objective results for objectives five and six was to be provided on the Conference Form (see Appendix D), Home Visit Form (see Appendix E), School Function Related Form and Attendance Sheet (see Appendix F) on a weekly basis for each parent participating in this project. The report was to include date of contact, the attendance of school related functions, subject discussed, method of contact, and follow-up activities. Documentation codes were to be utilized to facilitate ease of paperwork (p = phone calls, w = written correspondence, h = home visit, o = other means of interaction) when reporting parent communication. Any non-involvement for any of the original reasons was to be indicated by code on the report form. Any unexpected event that would affect the project was to be documented on the Record of Unexpected Events form to aid in the analysis of the practicum data (see Appendix H).

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

There was an insufficient amount of parental involvement within a Chapter I School Wide Project. Unless there was carry over from the child's classroom experiences into the child's home environment, the educational and social relationship of both the parent / child environment and the school / child environment was endangered. The very success of the child and his community were in jeopardy.

Effective parent involvement programs for low income parents must consider different levels of parent development and existing needs for support prior to asking them to provide services to the school / or child.

Some suggestions from Becker and Epstein (1982) were activities to help all families establish home environments to support learning, design more effective forms of communication to reach parents, recruit and organize parent help and support, provide ideas to parents on how to help their child at home and to recruit and train parent leaders. Since the 1989's there has been a movement towards the development of family support services. Research suggests that on a developmental continuum, some parents

need support first, educational activities for learning about the child next, then how to help their child learn last (Epstein, 1989).

Home-based parent partnership programs by contrast, show clear academic gains for students as well as increased levels of parental interest and support for the school. Teachers have reported greater knowledge of their student's home environment as a benefit of home-based models. In locales in which parent involvement activities are based on parent need and level of development, significant educational, political and bureaucratic benefits are made (Becker & Epstein, 1982).

Schools must develop practices to promote the following five levels of parent involvement:

(1) parenting

(2) communicating

(3) volunteering

(4) learning at home

(5) representing other parents.

Additional data is available describing increased opportunities for involvement of minority families by allowing bilingual and multicultural activities on school property (Epstein, 1989). Many of these activities prevent parental resignation of their child's academic failure by preventive activities and the promotion of self-esteem

(Rutherford, 1979). Henderson (1987) provides ideas to parents on how to help their children at home based on suggested family needs.

Many solutions suggested in recent literature address the issue of home / school communication (Cattermole & Robinson, 1985). It has been recommended that multiple methods of communication including phone calls, conferences, home visits, written correspondence and attendance at school related functions be provided to accommodate parents schedules (Cone & Wolfe, 1985).

Successful parent participation programs have included a survey of parents regarding services they would like to see the school provide for them as well as their children (Mc Laughlin & Shields, 1987). In this way community services are coordinated by school personnel and information provided to disadvantage families (Landerholm & Karr, 1988). Also, a plan to recruit and organize parent help and support based on talents and strengths of individual parents would guarantee activity community involvement and ownership (Davis, B. 1989). There may be community resources to provide assistance for limited-English speaking parents (Cummings & Maddus, 1988).

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

To develop a program to increase parental involvement within the Chapter I School Wide Project, this

writer was prepared to incorporate many identified activities designed to increase disadvantaged family participation. School personnel are dedicated to involving minority and disadvantaged families in non-traditional activities, providing needed services for these families, and rewarding parents' effort rather than student achievement. This writer was prepared to expend federal funds to create a computer assisted instructional lab and provide materials such as computers, software, and follow-up activities for parents to use at home. In addition school personnel provided training in the use of the take-home computers and materials on an evening and weekend schedule to accommodate parent needs.

In addition the writer coordinated community services for low income families. The social services available in the community were presented to the target group in a fair-like atmosphere. Each social service agency had a booth where parents gained information about that service, got assistance applying for specific help, made appointments with social services agents and took home brochures and handouts describing available services. Balloons, activities for children, and refreshments completed the fair-like atmosphere.These services included transportation to and from training workshops, conferences, and school activities. Arrangements with local

businesses and churches provided phone access pertaining to school business for those families without phones. Workshops and seminars were held in alternative community buildings for safety and convenience. Finally, the project design included rewarding parent effort with decals and certificates for parent effort as well as student achievement.

Report Of Action Taken

Implementation of this practicum began at the start of March 1991 and continued for twelve weeks. This strategy involved professional staff training during the first week followed by ten weeks of implementation and concluded with week twelve being used for exit interviews and graduation activities.

During week one of the twelve week period, a workshop was scheduled for those individuals who would work with the families participating in the practicum. Home / school liaisons, the lead Chapter I Computer Assisted Instructional lab teacher, and the writer met to define the scope of the project and each of their responsibilities. Specific families for participation were identified and contacted. Families were asked to attend an ice cream social during which an exciting parent participation program involving a take-home computer program would be explained. After the parents and families made the decision to

participate, the home / school liaisons met with the families to conduct interviews and discuss each participating families' educational, social, and parenting needs.

During week two, initial interviews with families were analyzed and appropriate offerings for parents were decided upon. A night was chosen for the initial meeting. Parents were contacted to attend an inservice night at which time the distribution of computers and software were given to participating families. At this meeting the theme of "Parents as Educational Partners" (to be referred to as the P.E.P. Club) was decided upon to represent the project during the implementation period. The writer was encouraged by the attendance of non-identified families who chose to attend the meeting, asking to participate in the workshops planned during the twelve week project. A plan was established that would allow parents and family members to acquire points for each activity or workshop they attended. At the conclusion of the project, the families scoring the most points in the first and second place would win a participation plaque. Parents and family members would be required to sign in at any activity that was school related.

The third week the writer presented a workshop requested by families to develop parenting skills on topics

such as establishing contacts with the school personnel, parents rights, and the dos and don'ts of homework. The workshop was well attended with 35 participants represented. Those families who were unable to attend sent relatives or friends to take their place to ensure that they received their points towards the plaques.

The fourth week the writer met with the lead Chapter I computer assisted lab teacher who was working with the children of targeted families to confirm responsibilities. Other practicum activities continued as planned.

During week five the writer met with the home / school liaisons to monitor logs that were required to document communication with targeted families and to check levels of participation by families.

Week six, the home / school liaisons checked with the families and the lead Chapter I teacher to determine the need for transportation to school for mandatory mid-term conferences on student progress. Those requiring assistance were aided in acquiring transportation to and from school.

The seventh week the writer conducted a follow-up take-home computer workshop to determine any problems with software and / or equipment. Enrichment activities were presented and future classes were scheduled with the community college representative for adult sessions in computer literacy to include all members of the family.

The eighth week participants were notified of an upcoming social-service fair. Vendors were notified and arrangement made by the school's guidance counselor to house the event at the local school.

During week nine participation by project parents at the social-services fair was not well attended as only two of the nineteen families attended.

During week ten the writer published a list of social, medical and parenting services in the community. Home / school liaisons met with families to determine any needs not expressed at the social services fair.

Week eleven the writer met with home/ school liaisons and the lead Chapter I teacher to determine any additional needs prior to the close of the project. The writer also conducted a workshop in which participants made T-shirts for graduation. Once again 35 participants met to design t-shirts either for their family or another family that could not attend.

Week twelve found the participants going through exit interviews with their assigned home / school liaison and lead Chapter I teacher. The week concluded with a graduation pot-luck dinner arranged by the parents and their families. Certificates were awarded to all families and a second and first place plaque was given to the families with the largest amount of activity points acquired during the

twelve week period. Activities from which points were assigned ranged from volunteering on field trips to in-class assistance.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Due to the vast changes in the economic and social factors of one community located in central Florida, the interior and exterior factors influencing a specific Chapter I school had deteriorated to become one of the highest crime and drug-use areas in the county. The school was negatively influenced by these factors as evidenced by the lack of parental involvement in student academics and school related activities. Many efforts have been made on the part of the school-level personnel to improve parent participation, however, all of these efforts had been unsuccessful.

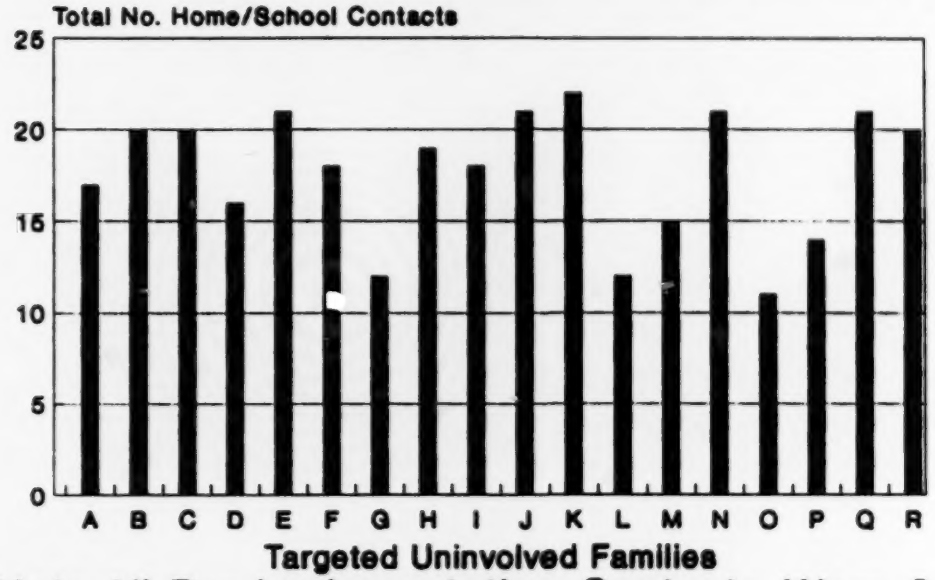
The solution strategy used by this writer involved meeting the needs of various levels of parental development and ability which included a community support component. More effective forms of communication were designed and implemented along with educational activities using computer assisted instruction designed to increase educational involvement between parent and child.

The first objective of the program was that twenty out of twenty Chapter I targeted uninvolved parents would have teacher / parent contact during the practicum project. This objective was measured by demonstrating increased

dialogue between parent and teacher as recorded on forms and daily logs (see Appendices A and E). The outcome of the objective was that 19 out of 20 families chose to participate in this project. Of these 19 families participating, all 19 increased home / school communication. The frequency of parent / school communication ranged from a high of 22 contacts during a twelve week period to 11 contacts for that same period (see Figure 1). One possible explanation for the differences in frequency of contact is that work schedules varied among families. Due to the fact that the original home / school contact was little or nothing, even the least number of contacts (eleven) was a substantial increase.

Figure 1

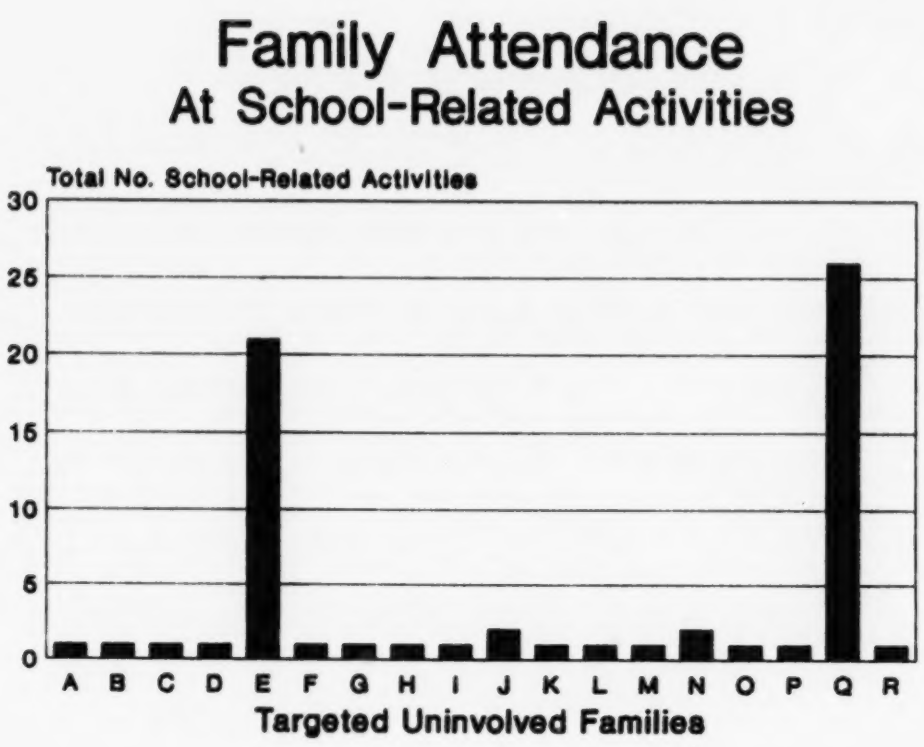
A Comparison of Pre and Post
Project Implementation Home/Schools



Note:All Pre Implementation Contacts Were 0

The second objective of the practicum stated that eighteen out of twenty targeted uninvolved parents will attend Chapter I events, P.T.A. meetings, conferences, and other school-related activities. This objective was measured by analyzing attendance records of school-related activities which were recorded on an attendance form (see Appendix F). Results of objective two include data which indicates that all 19 participating families attended at least one school-related activity other than required conferences and workshops. The range of activity attendance was 1-26, with two families attending two additional activities, one family attending 21 additional activities, and another family attending 26 additional activities (see Figure 2). The motivation for the two families who participated in 21 and 26 additional activities were points earned towards the awarding of the parent involvement plaques.

Figure 2


Family Attendance
At School-Related Activities
Total No. School-Related Activities
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R
Targeted Uninvolved Families

Project objective three was that twenty out of twenty targeted uninvolved parents would have at least one of the designated methods of parent / teacher conference. The objective was measured by documenting the type of parent / teacher contact on a specific form (see Appendices A, D, E, F). The data collected from these forms show that 17 out of 19 participants chose school visits as their primary form of home / school communication for the initial required parent / teacher conference. This was a majority as compared to the one family who chose a home visit, one family who chose a phone call, and no family who chose a written message (see Figure 3).

In contrast, parent initiated home / school communication during the twelve week project favored phone calls, with 43 contacts by phone, 8 school visits, 1 written message and no home visits (see Figure 4). It appears that parents felt more comfortable requesting information about their child over the phone.

Figure 3

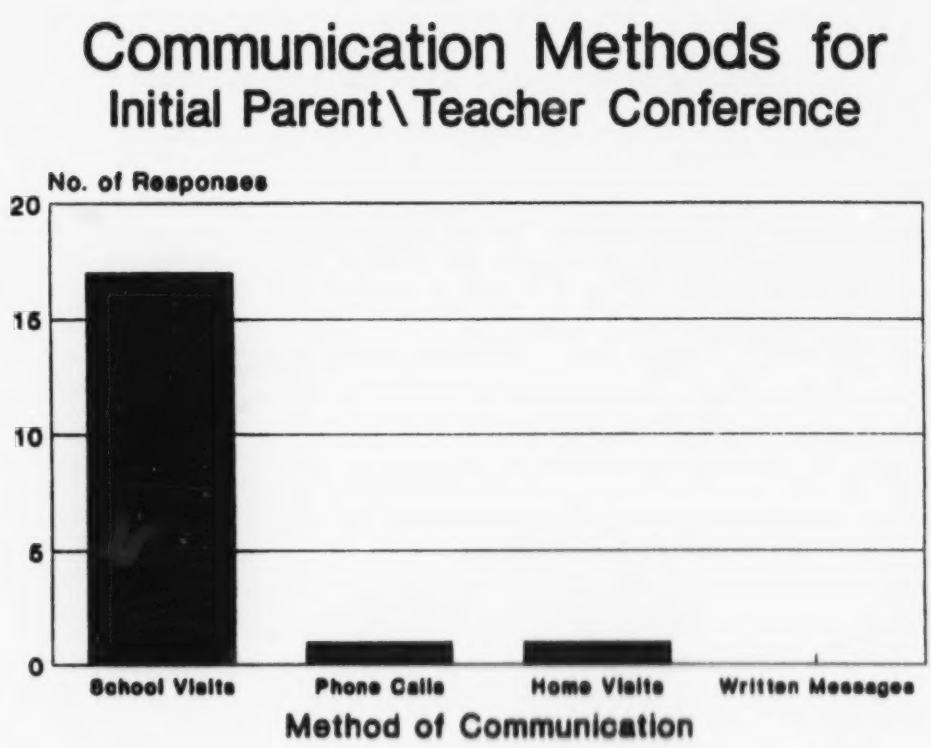
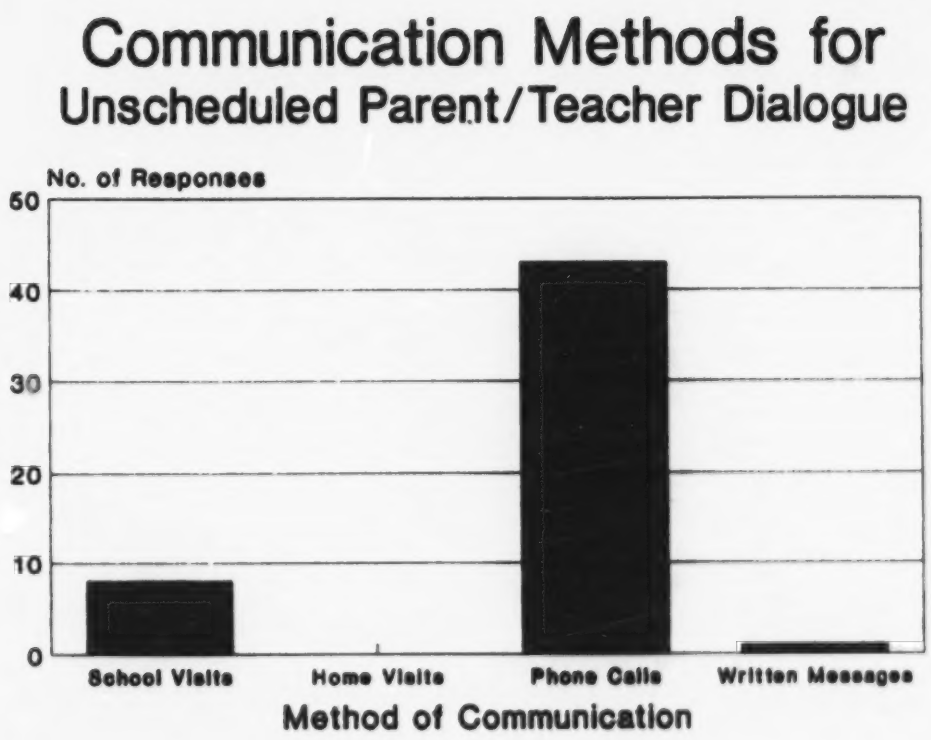

Communication Methods for
Initial Parent\Teacher Conference
No. of Responses
20
15
10
5
0
School Visits
Phone Calls
Home Visits
Written Messages
Method of Communication

Figure 4


Communication Methods for
Unscheduled Parent/Teacher Dialogue
No. of Responses
60
40
30
20
10
0
School Visits
Home Visits
Phone Calls
Written Messages
Method of Communication

The fourth objective of the project was that sixteen out of twenty targeted uninvolved parents would rate post practicum experiences favorably and would identify in writing those social services that would be provided to assure more active parental involvement. This objective was measured by a majority of favorable responses on an exit interview and on analysis of written responses regarding the need for social services. Outcomes of this objective include 19 "yes" (favorable responses) out of the 19 families interviewed on question one which asked if the project was effective in meeting the needs of the family. Two out of 19 respondents stated that proper consideration was given to the time of home visits. Of the four types of communication methods offered, phone calls were preferred by 16, written messages by 1, home visits by 1, and school conferences by 1. In all 19 families stated they would become more involved in their child's academic progress and workshops that were offered, 18 families would be more involved in classroom activities, 10 would participate more as school volunteers, and 6 would become participants in P.T.A. (see Table 3).

Table 3

Exit Interview-Participant Needs Assessment Form Responses

EXIT INTERVIEW
PARTICIPANT NEEDS ASSESSMENT FORM
FOR TWELVE WEEK PARENT INVOLVEMENT
EXIT INTERVIEW RESPONSES

1. DO YOU FEEL THAT THE PROJECT WAS EFFECTIVE IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUR FAMILY IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS: Y = YES N = NO N/A =DOES NOT APPLY

	YES	NO	N/A
A EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE	19	0	0
B ADULT LITERACY	19	0	0
C SOCIAL SERVICES	19	0	0
D MEDICAL	19	0	0
E TRANSPORTATION	19	0	0
F PATENTING	19	0	0
G COMMUNITY INFORMATION	19	0	0

2. DO YOU FEEL THAT PROPER CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN WITH REGARDS TO THE TIME HOME VISITS WERE MADE DURING THE TWELVE WEEK PROJECT? 2 0 17

3. DO YOU NOW FEEL AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT THAT YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL PROCESS WILL INCREASE?

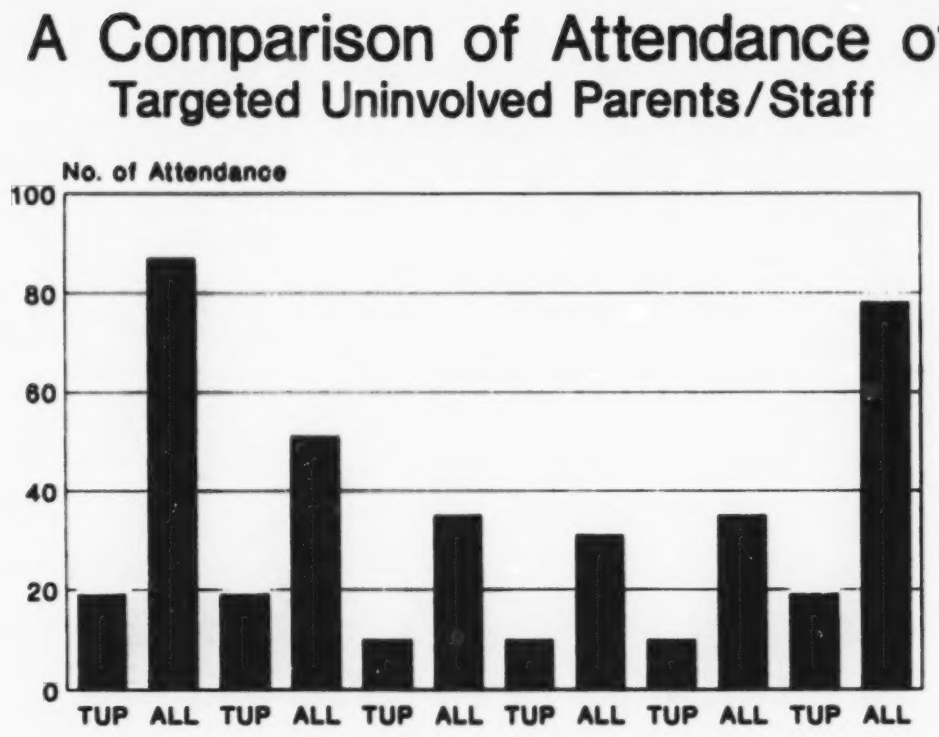
A. CHILD'S CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES	18	1	0
B. ACADEMIC	19	0	0
C. VOLUNTEER	10	9	0
D. WORKSHOPS	19	0	0
E. P.T.A. MEMBERSHIP	6	7	6

4. OF THE FOUR TYPES OF COMMUNICATION (PHONE CALLS, WRITTEN MESSAGES, HOME VISITS, AND SCHOOL CONFERENCES WHICH ONE OR ONES DID YOU FEEL MOST BENEFICIAL?

PC	WM	HV	SC
16	1	1	1

Objective five of this project was that twenty out of twenty targeted uninvolved parents would attend an orientation and training session for the Chapter I take-home computers made available to the target group. Objective five was measured by analyzing records of the take-home computer session attendance form (see Appendix F). The outcomes of this objective indicated that the original 19 targeted uninvolved families were in attendance at sessions one, two and six. In sessions two through five, 10 of the 19 original participants were in attendance. Those families who were unable to attend these sessions were represented by relatives or other community associates. In addition, persons other then those targeted attended regularly and contributed to the large number of participants. The range of participants was a high of 87 and a low of 31, which exceeded the targeted number of 19 uninvolved families at each session (see Figure 5).

Figure 5


A Comparison of Attendance of
Targeted Uninvolved Parents/Staff
No. of Attendance
100
80
60
40
20
0
TUP ALL TUP ALL TUP ALL TUP ALL TUP ALL TUP ALL

The sixth and final objective was that twenty out of twenty targeted uninvolved parents would check out a computer and related software for home use. The objective was measured by documenting computer hardward and software checkout on an existing form (see Appendix G). Analysis of the data collected on the Parent Computer Agreement Form shows that 19 out of 19 of the targeted uninvolved families who chose to participate in the program checked out the computer and appropriate software. Additionally, each targeted family retained the computers and software for the total duration of the project which lasted twelve weeks. During this time, families had the opportunity to exchange software as the child advanced through the programmed material.

Discussion

All six objectives of this practicium project were met or exceeded due to the design of the project itself. Careful attention to the target population and their prior pattern of uninvolvement were analyzed and strategies were developed to insure participation of even the most reluctant parent.

A general assumption that can be derived from the results of this project is that all parents are interested in the success of their child, both academically and socially. Most parents are concerned about their actual role in the

education of their child and posses an insecurity about their ability to participate in the educational process.

The overwhelming parental support for this project and the success of every objective indicate a high degree of correlation between the results of this practicum and the results described in related literature. There are three comprehensive themes that reoccur as factors in patterns of improved parent involvement.

The first theme that is indicated is that there are levels of parental development and ability which must be assessed before a parental involvement program begins. Epstein (1989) and Fine (1989) describe these developmental levels on a continuum and indicate certain activities are more appropriate for each level. This writer has described at length the consideration of these factors when choosing strategies and activities. Rick (1985) also describes how to determine parental interest and abilities then design activities accordingly. In this project, a survey of needs was included as described by Mc Laughlin (1987) and the results were used to determine project needs. The parental needs indicated in this project were not as numerous as those described in the study by Cicheti (1987), but were present in that literature.

A second reoccurring theme was that of improved methods of parent / school communications. Disadvantaged

parents had feelings of educational / academic inadequacy and lack of communication skills as described by Cavazos (1987). The original observations of the writer at the onset of this practicum project determined this factor to be relevant. Cattermole (1985) described multiple methods of communication with parents and the positive results that were received. In this project, the results also imply that the variety of methods of communication which included phone calls, home visits and written messages insured the attainment of the objective to increase home/ school communication. Once communication took place between home / school, the specific needs of the family as well as the child could be addressed. Strategies were individualized for the families and information on social services were distributed similar to those described by Landerholm (1988).

Finally, the third theme that reoccurred in the literature review as well as the practicum project was that home-based learning increased interest and support for education. Henderson (1986) described methods to create supportive educational environments in the home. Again Henderson (1987) tested ideas for home-based educational activities which had positive results. Becker (1982) also describes activities to establish a home environment that supports learning and showed the positive correlation home-based partnerships had with increased parental support

of education. Following Wherry's (1989) suggestion that we supply hands-on activities for home use such as computer hardware and software the same positive results were discovered in this practicum regarding increased interest by parents in their child's academic success.

In addition, there were several positive unanticipated outcomes. The writer never expected that scope of the enthusiasm demonstrated for this project. Along with the original targeted uninvolved parent and at-risk child, numerous other family members and interested community persons attended the scheduled workshops on a regular basis. These people wanted a computer and were not able to get one due to the limited number but attended the academic, social / emotional, and conferencing technique sessions anyway. This involvement may have a far-reaching effect on all students at this school site.

Another unexpected outcome was that instead of being afraid of the new technology which the computer represented, parents got hooked on computers themselves and requested additional inservice on the use of the home-based computer. Parents asked for additional software and recognized software applications for various reasons such as those whose children needed vocabulary development because they were bilingual.

Finally, a very positive outcome which was definitely unanticipated was the scope of parent empowerment that

resulted from this project. Parents initiated the suggestion that they become mentors for other families as the program continues in 91-92. They became volunteers for leadership positions in the school such as P.T.A. officer, Local School Advisory Council members, coordinators of the spaghetti dinner and classroom volunteers. In the community, these same parents sponsored a walk-a-thon and established a clothes closet at a local church for others less fortunate. In addition, at the final project workshop parents chose topics for and contributed to a publication distributed to all parents of that school site which gave information on children's educational rights, homework strategies, conferencing skills, and behavior management techniques.

The initial solution strategy used by this writer involved meeting the needs of various levels of parental development and ability while addressing the concerns and needs of the community. Five factors became quite evident as a result of this project:

1. Prior to designing a parent involvement program, one must consider levels of parent development along with existing interests and abilities.
2. Activities must be specifically designed accordingly.
3. The use of multiple methods of communication

must be provided.

4. An incentive must be provided which will attract participants.
5. Home-based learning and helping parents develop an academically supportive home environment increases student success in school as well as interest and support for education.

Recommendations

The writer designed a program to target uninvolved parents of disadvantaged families and implement strategies to increase home and school interaction. Since the program was incredibly successful, the writer recommends:

1. Expand project in this selected elementary school to include students and their families who are not disadvantaged or academically at risk.
2. The project has district-wide implications and should be replicated in other schools whose strategic goals are to increase parent participation and community involvement.
3. Utilize parents and community members who participated in this project and have been trained to act as mentors facilitating the expansion of the concept to other families.

Dissemination

The enthusiastic success of this project encouraged

the writer to share the results of the project with other Chapter I directors and coordinators during a Department of Education Area III meeting. Those districts represented during a cluster meeting have taken the positive results of this project back to their county Chapter I program office and have requested a copy of the plan for possible implementation in their work settings.

Additionally, an abstract of this practicum will be distributed by the writer to the district administration and various program heads within the district for their information and possible implementation.

Finally, this writer has distributed the positive results of the project to the news media of the community for publication with acknowledgements to the families and community involved.

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APPENDIX A

PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCE FORM
FOR TWELVE WEEK PROJECT

FAMILY NAME: _____ DATE: _____

TEACHER: _____ GRADE: _____

TYPE OF CONFERENCE: _____SCHOOL _____HOME VISIT _____PHONE

PURPOSE OF CONFERENCE:

___INTRODUCTION

___ABSENCE

___ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

___HOMEWORK

___CLASSROOM WORK

___BEHAVIOR / CONDUCT

OTHER: _____

_____

RESULTS OF CONFERENCE:

FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE RECOMMENDED ? ___YES ___NO

*IF YES HAS BEEN CHECKED: DATE: _____ TIME: _____

FOLLOW-UP PLAN:

___SPEECH / VISION/ HEARING SCREENING

___READING ASSESSMENT

___MATH ASSESSMENT

___TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE

___BEHAVIORAL MOD.

___COUNSELING

___SOCIAL SERVICE

___OTHER: _____

_____

TEACHER'S SIGNATURE: _____

PARENT'S SIGNATURE: _____

APPENDIX B

INITIAL INTERVIEW
PARTICIPANT NEEDS ASSESSMENT FORM
FOR TWELVE WEEK PARENT INVOLVEMENT
PROJECT FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WILL BE USED TO ASSIST PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN DURING THE TWELVE WEEK PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROJECT. WE ARE DELIGHTED THAT YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS EDUCATIONAL ADVENTURE WITH YOUR CHILD.

1. DO YOU HAVE A NEED FOR:

_____EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE (G.E.D. PREPARATION, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR SCHOOL, ETC)

_____ADULT LITERACY CLASSES

_____SOCIAL SERVICE ASSISTANCE (FOOD, HOUSING, UTILITY PAYMENT, ETC.)

_____MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (CHILD'S PHYSICAL, IMMUNIZATION, ETC.)

_____TRANSPORTATION (TO AND FROM SCHOOL, STORE, DOCTORS, ETC.)

_____PARENTING CLASSES

_____COMMUNITY INFORMATION

_____OTHER:_____

2. BEST TIME TO BE CONTACTED:

_____MORNING (TIME:_____)

_____AFTERNOON (TIME:_____)

_____EVENING (TIME:_____)

3. BEST METHOD OF COMMUNICATION:

_____TELEPHONE

_____WRITTEN

_____HOME VISIT

_____SCHOOL VISIT

4. YOUR PAST OR PRESENT INVOLVEMENT WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL:

_____CHILD'S CLASSROOM ACITIVTY (FILED TRIP, PARTY, PLAY OR PROGRAM)

_____ACADEMIC (PROGRESS REPORT, REPORT CARD, CONFERENCE)

_____ADMINISTRATIVE (DISCIPLINARY)

_____VOLUNTEER

_____WORKSHOPS

_____PARENTING CLASSES

5. PERSONAL DATA:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

PHONE: (HOME)_____(WORK)_____

CHILD / CHILDREN:

_____AGE: _____GRADE_____

_____AGE: _____GRADE: _____

_____AGE: _____GRADE: _____

_____AGE: _____GRADE: _____

APPENDIX C

EXIT INTERVIEW
PARTICIPANT NEEDS ASSESSMENT FORM
FOR TWELVE WEEK PARENT INVOLVEMENT
PROJECT FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WILL BE USED TO ASSIST IN DETERMINING ADDITIONAL NEEDS OF PARENTS, CHILDREN, AND FAMILIES. IN ADDITION THE INTERVIEW WILL SERVE TO ANALYZE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM FROM THE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE.

1. DO YOU FEEL THAT THE PROJECT WAS EFFECTIVE IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUR FAMILY IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS: Y = YES N = NO N/A =DOES NOT APPLY

____EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE (PLEASE RESPOND IF YOUR ANSWER WAS EITHER YES OR NO)._____
_____
_____.

____ADULT LITERACY (PLEASE RESPOND IF YOUR ANSWER WAS EITHER YES OR NO)._____
_____
_____.

____SOCIAL SERVICES (PLEASE RESPOND IF YOUR ANSWER WAS EITHER YES OR NO)._____
_____
_____.

____MEDICAL (PLEASE RESPOND IF YOUR ANSWER WAS EITHER YES OR NO)._____
_____
_____.

____TRANSPORTATION (PLEASE RESPOND IF YOUR ANSWER WAS EITHER YES OR NO)._____
_____
_____.

____PARENTING (PLEASE RESPOND IF YOUR ANSWER WAS EITHER YES OR NO)._____
_____
_____.

____COMMUNITY INFORMATION (PLEASE RESPOND IF YOUR ANSWER WAS EITHER YES OR NO)._____
_____
_____.

____OTHER (PLEASE RESPOND TO INDICATE OTHER ASSISTANCE THAT WAS PROVIDED TO YOURSELF OR FAMILY)._____
_____.

2.____ DO YOU FEEL THAT PROPER CONCENTRATION WAS GIVEN WITH REGARDS TO THE TIME HOME VISITS WERE MADE DURING THE TWELVE WEEK PROJECT? (PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER)_____

_____

_____.

3. OF THE FOUR TYPES OF COMMUNICATION (PHONE CALLS, WRITTEN, HOME VISITS , AND SCHOOL CONFERENCES WHICH ONE ONE(S) DID YOU FEEL WERE MOST BENEFICIAL? (PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER)

_____

_____

_____.

4.DO YOU NOW FEEL AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT THAT YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL PROCESS WILL INCREASE IN ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS? (YOU MAY CHECK MORE THAN ONE AREA). PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR RESPONSE.

____CHILD'S CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES (FIELD TRIPS, PARTY PLAYS ETC.)_____

_____

_____.

____ACADEMIC (CONFERENCES)_____

_____

_____.

____VOLUNTEER (DIVIDENDS PROGRAM)_____

_____

_____.

____WORKSHOPS _____

_____

_____.

____P.T.A. MEMBERSHIP_____

_____

_____.

____OTHER _____

_____

_____.

5. PERSONAL DATA:

NAME:_____

ADDRESS:_____

_____

PHONE: (HOME)_____(WORK)_____

CHILDREN:_____AGE:_____GRADE:____

_____AGE:_____GRADE:____

_____AGE:_____GRADE:____

APPENDIX D

PARENT CONFERENCE DOCUMENTATIOH FORM
FOR TWELVE WEEK PROJECT

*INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF - PLEASE INCLUDE THIS SHEET IN YOUR WEEKLY FOLDER IN ADDITION TO HOME VISITS.

PLEASE INDAICATE TYPE OF CONFERENCE AS FOLLOWS: S = SCHOOL
P = PHONE CONFERENCE H = HOME VISIT W= WRITTEN MESSAGE

FAMILY'S NAME / DATE / TOPIC OF CONVERSATION / METHOD

1. _____/_____/_____/_____
2. _____/_____/_____/_____
3. _____/_____/_____/_____
4. _____/_____/_____/_____
5. _____/_____/_____/_____
6. _____/_____/_____/_____
7. _____/_____/_____/_____
8. _____/_____/_____/_____
9. _____/_____/_____/_____
10. _____/_____/_____/_____
11. _____/_____/_____/_____
12. _____/_____/_____/_____
13. _____/_____/_____/_____
14. _____/_____/_____/_____
15 _____/_____/_____/_____
16. _____/_____/_____/_____
17. _____/_____/_____/_____
18. _____/_____/_____/_____
19. _____/_____/_____/_____
20. _____/_____/_____/_____
21. _____/_____/_____/_____

APPENDIX E

HOME VISIT AND PHONE CALL DOCUMENTATION FORM
FOR TWELVE WEEK PARENT
INVOLVEMENT PROJECT

NAME OF HOME / SCHOOL LIASION: _____

*PLEASE LIST BELOW THE HOME VISITS YOU MAKE DURING THE TWELVE WEEK PARENT INVOLVEMENT PORJECT. FORMS WILL BE COLLECTED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROJECT.

	DATE	/FAMILY	/RESULTS OF THE VISIT/PHONE CALL
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			

APPENDIX F

PARENT INVOLVEMENT DOCUMENTATION FORM

P. E. P. CLUB SIGNATURES
(PARENTS AS EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS)

PARENT INVOLVEMENT
SIGN-IN SHEET FOR
TWELVE WEEK PROJECT

FAMILY	DATE	PURPOSE
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		
18.		
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20.		
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23.		
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26.		
27.		
28.		
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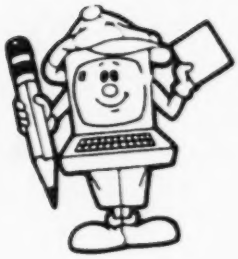
30.		
31.		
32.		
33.		
34.		
35.		
36.		
37.		
38.		
39.		
40.		
41.		
42.		
43.		

APPENDIX G



PARENT COMPUTER AGREEMENT FORM

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF SEMINOLE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CHAPTER I TAKE HOME COMPUTER PROGRAM

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY AGREEMENT

CHILD'S NAME_____GRADE_____

PARENT'S NAME_____

ADDRESS_____TELEPHONE_____

SCHOOL_____

PLEASE RETURN THE FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT ON:_____

_____APPLE IIc DISK DRIVE }
_____APPLE IIc COMPUTER } #_____
_____APPLE IIc MONITOR }
_____COMPUTER CARRYING CASE
_____SOFTWARE AND CARRYING CASE
_____UFONICS SYSTEM (FOR 2ND AND 3RD GRADE SOFTWARE ONLY!)

****

I, the undersigned parent, understand that I am responsible for the borrowed Chapter I computer in the following ways:

1. I will see that the computer is used properly while in my home.

2. I will follow the correct procedures for connecting the computer to the monitor.

3. If I experience any problems with the computer equipment, I will notify the Chapter I Computer Program office immediately for help! (Call 322-4415, 8:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M. Monday - Friday)

4. If the computer or any of its components is stolen or damaged through vandalism or fire, I will contact the police and the Chapter I office immediately.

5. My child and I will return the computer, its components and software on the date given during the training session.

PARENT SIGNATURE_____DATE_____

SCS Form 953 (Rev.9/90)

APPENDIX H

Record of Unexpected Events

Week One: _____

Week Two: _____

Week Three: _____

Week Four: _____

Week Five: _____

Week Six: _____

Week Seven: _____

Week Eight: _____

Week Nine: _____

Week Ten: _____

Week Eleven: _____

Week Twelve: _____